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ABSTRACT

The focus of this presentation is on innovative human services which psychologists of the future may provide and which hopefully will improve the quality of life. Several suggestions are made regarding some relevant characteristics of quality of life. Economic affluence and level of consumption are not considered in this regard. Felt quality of life is considered predictable from a multiple correlation whose predictor variables include: (1) an emotionally stable and socially nurturant infancy and early childhood; (2) an interesting and challenging way of contributing to one's livelihood in the world of work; (3) reasonable security from random or capricious blows of fate and from irrational handicaps and hurdles based on racial, sexual and other prejudices; (4) pleasant and nurturant physical and social surroundings; (5) a sense of identity; (6) self-respect; and, (7) a feeling that one has reasonable control of one's life direction. It is noted that although traditionally psychologists have focused attention on individual behavior, there has been in recent years an enormous increase in the number of service-providers in psychology. The professionals are expected to become more numerous in the future; the scientists are regarded as destined to decrease both in numbers and resources. (Author/JM)

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Symposium Innovative Roles for Psychologists in Improving the Quality of Life

Location Americana Hotel, Vendome 11 and 12
Thursday, January 30, 1975 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

Panel

George Albee	"Psychology and Human Services"
Raymond Bauer	"The Psychologist-Generalist as Problem Solver"
C. Alan Boneau	"Psychologists: The Supply and Demand Context"
Arthur Brayfield	"Public Policy Psychology"
Lee Sechrest	"The Psychologist as Program Evaluator"
Serena Stier	"Psychology Working in the Legal Process"
Kenneth B. Little	- Discussant

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My assignment today is to talk about innovative human services which psychologists of the future may provide and which hopefully will improve the quality of life.

Clearly, we need to know at the outset what is meant by quality of life before having the temerity to undertake the task of suggesting how psychologists might improve it. I expect that other members of this symposium will have more to say on this subject, but let me take a moment or two to suggest some of the characteristics of quality of life which will have relevance for any attempt at suggesting roles psychologists might play in helping people move in a positive direction, quality-wise.

I will neglect for the most part a consideration of economic affluence and level of consumption on the quality of life. (This could invalidate the whole effort at definition, of course. Recently I drove from Miami to Palm Beach along Route 1, nearly one hundred miles. My senses were assaulted steadily by the roar of high-powered automobiles, by the garish neon of a thousand franchise drive-in junk-food palaces of plastic, formica and chrome, interspersed with roadside stands selling everything from pink plastic flamingos to oranges sprayed with poisonous coal-tar dye, from alligator jungles with Indian villages to porno drive-in movies and shops, liquor stores, on and on. Most of these places were jammed with apparently affluent people, so obviously these services are in demand in an affluent society. To those like myself who are contemptuous of such offerings there is the worrisome knowledge that European teenagers apparently yearn for, or imitate, their American peers in the consumption of junk food and hard rock, of old jeans and coca-cola.) Sometime we must confront the curious positive correlation between rising indices of economic affluence and an increase in alienation, crime, drug-use, and disaffiliation. Rene Dubos has described at some

length (without obvious romanticizing) the high level of satisfaction, joy and longevity enjoyed by groups of people scattered throughout the world and throughout history who live on a small fraction of the calories, the energy and the material possessions of "civilization." Despite wide variance in climate and geography these groups, living on meagre diets and working hard at primitive agriculture, enjoy their children, music and dancing, storytelling and ritual. They are very active sexually and socially throughout a very long life (in which the older people are expected as a matter of course to be full participants). Clearly, affluence and our potlatch-style consumption is not a necessary condition for a life of reported satisfaction.

We need more systematic data about people's subjective perception of the quality of their lives, about how they feel about their lives. The data we do have suggests that the answers we get from people will be determined in part by the kind of questions we ask. When a cross-section of Americans was asked how happy they felt, investigators found a decreasing score with increasing age. But when asked how satisfied they were with their lives, an increasing score with age was reported. Certainly there are some data on quality of life which are clear and relevant to our task. A certain amount of economic security is required for a person to report that s/he finds life to have a real measure of quality. Further, the more challenging and stimulating one's job, the more satisfaction is reported. Pleasant physical surroundings also are reported to be related to life satisfaction. Another study found an almost perfect correlation between where one lived on the rural-urban continuum and reported life satisfaction. I'm not sure I need spell out the direction of the correlation. The New Yorker, cowering behind locked doors with a trained Doberman watch-dog, reports feeling a lower level of life quality than the farmer, from Vermont or elsewhere, despite the enormous discrepancy in certain cultural resources available to the latter.

Because of the press of time and space limitations, I will suggest that felt quality of life is predictable from a multiple correlation whose predictor variables include (1) an emotionally stable and socially nurturant infancy and early childhood, (2) an interesting and challenging way of contributing to one's livelihood in the world of work, (3) reasonable security from random or capricious blows of fate and from irrational handicaps and hurdles based on racial, sexual and other prejudices, (4) pleasant and nurturant physical and social surroundings, (5) a sense of identity, (6) self-respect, and (7) a feeling that one has reasonable control of one's life direction.

Now the question is: What modest contributions can psychologists make to foster more of these experiences and feelings in more people?

Psychology is frequently defined as the scientific study of individual differences. Traditionally, psychologists have focused attention on individual behavior -- have done research on how the behavior of individuals is affected by external and internal forces. In recent years, however, there has been an enormous increase in the number of service-providers in psychology so that, as other speakers will describe in more detail, we must broaden our definition of psychology to include increasing numbers of therapists, helpers, consultants, social change agents, and others whose primary identification is more professional than scientific. The professionals will become more numerous in the future; the scientists seem destined to decrease both in numbers and resources in an increasingly anti-intellectual climate and sluggish steady-state educational system.

Americans have developed a love-hate relationship with psychology. Part of this ambivalence derives from the fact that psychology, and some of its sister disciplines, have made major contributions to the growing suspicion that God is dead, or at least that She is very different from the nineteenth-century patriarch floating in the heavens in an imitation of Michelangelo's Jehovah sidestroking

across the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Psychology, of course, has not been alone in nurturing these seeds of doubt. The suspicion has been growing, at least since Copernicus' discovery that we are warmed by a pale little star somewhere out on the periphery of an enormous, though relatively insignificant, galaxy lost in the trackless void of space. More recently, Darwin added to our uncertainty when he shared the shattering insight that the human species was continuous with lower forms of animal life, and not created separately in the image of God. Latter-day Victorians, terrified with this information and with the upheavals occasioned by the perceptions of Karl Marx, must now face the implications of the works of Freud and Skinner.

Consider the implications of the Freudian message: that the mind is like an iceberg, nine-tenths of it unavailable to human consciousness; that human behavior follows the same lawful processes as do other natural phenomena; that people's behavior is determined by experiences and impulses over which they have little or no control. Add to this Skinner's message: that behavior is largely controlled by external reinforcement and that behavior changes with changes in reinforcement. He implies that we invent attitudes and philosophies to explain or rationalize behavior that is largely an automatic response to external forces. Skinner puts it this way:

> I submit that what we call the behavior of the human organism is no more free than its digestion, gestation, immunization, or any other physiological process. Because it is much more complex, and its lawfulness is, therefore, much harder to demonstrate. But a scientific analysis moves in that direction, and we can already throw some light on traditional topics, such as free will or creativity, which is more helpful than traditional accounts, and I believe that further progress is imminent.
>
> The issue is, of course, determinism. Slightly more than 100 years ago, in a famous paper, Claude Bernard raised with respect to physiology the issue which now stands before us in the behavioral sciences. The almost insurmountable obstacle to the application of scientific method in biology was, he said, the belief in "vital spontaneity." His contemporary, Louis Pasteur, was responsible for a dramatic test of the theory of spontaneous generation of behavior in the guise of ideas and acts of will is now at the stage of the spontaneous generation of life in the form of maggots and microorganisms 100 years ago.

These messages undermine the comforting beliefs that sustained Western society for so long: that there is order, a plan, reason and justice in the universe. As the supports are removed we must increasingly face the existential terror of ambiguity and meaninglessness.

But the onion has many more layers, and most of us surmount the existential depression and struggle on, often with some joy and verve. What are some of the areas of this struggle where psychology has an influence?

Revolution often comes after a successful challenge of authority. Once authority has been challenged and has failed to destroy the challengers, there comes a time of ferment, of creativity, of anxiety and uncertainty, out of which evolves a whole set of new social structures and institutions. I won't take time to explore this intriguing subject beyond reminding the audience of the wide-ranging social development in England following the Magna Carta, of the bursts of energy following the Protestant Reformation, of the dramatic developments in the Soviet Union and China in recent years.

Although the challenge to authority I want to mention is on a smaller scale and far less cataclysmic, the fact remains that psychology has challenged the official explanation of mental disturbance as being a result of defects or illnesses. The old medical model is simply no longer credible. As a consequence, the hold which psychiatry and medicine have had on the field of intervention with the mentally disturbed is perilously close to being lost. One consequence for the future will be the movement of large numbers of psychologists, and other new groups with new doctrine, into the field of personal counseling and psychotherapy at a time when demands for help are increasing. It is hard to anticipate what new and innovative kinds of therapies will develop because of the great variety that has sprung up over the past twenty years from the ashes of the sickness model. Encounter groups and nude marathons are competing with meditation and the religions

of the East in the garden of psychotherapy, all striving for the nurturance of the warm sunlight of financial support. To mix a metaphor, psychology will be there with plenty of troops. Twelve thousand new first-year doctoral students a year are being selected from a huge pool of aspiring psychology, many of whom are aspiring therapists. Undergraduates in astounding numbers are majoring in psychology and a very large number of them are reporting themselves motivated by a burning desire to "help people." Psychology is selecting from its applicant pool recruits who are very bright and highly motivated, with whose demands we can just barely cope.

It is very difficult to see how there will be anything but a significant increase for the near future in the role of psychologists in the delivery of psychotherapy. One of the greatest hungers of the lonely person, or the person searching for meaning, is for a sympathetic listener, a guru to talk to. One of the greatest needs of the anxious person is for a voice of authority giving reassurance. A universal need among those who have lost their faith is a new faith, a system which explains life's mysteries with authorities to interpret the obscure places in the scripture. Also, the role of the psychotherapist is exceedingly rewarding in financial tokens as well as in personal reassurance and status. If national health insurance is passed, and includes psychological services, speculation about other fields of employment in psychology may be wasted effort. Professions with a near-monopoly, and with controlled entry into the field, cannot fail to prosper with any form of government-paid reimbursement for services in great demand. Psychotherapy is in great demand. (I will not, today, go into the cognitive dissonance created in the psychologist who knows emotional disturbance is not an <u>illness</u>, but who accepts money from a national health scheme for his "treatment" of his "patients."

Clearly, there is a large public that is willing and eager to pay for psy-

chological services. In certain regions -- New York, Chicago, most of California -- psychologists in the private practice of individual and group psychotherapy find a ready market for their services. Indeed, the market seems so large that these psychologists are seriously going about establishing new professional schools to train more people like themselves, complaining bitterly at the lack of responsiveness of traditional graduate programs for not providing more practitioners. If demand for these sorts of personal psychological services exists, or can be created, in other regions of the country, it seems probable that a great many of our newly-minted Ph.D.'s might find employment in such service activities. Obviously, there are other areas of applied psychology where employment opportunities are still promising. Despite the federal reduction in mental health funding the demand will continue strong for people to intervene with the mentally disordered poor and with the retarded and handicapped in state and local tax-supported facilities.

There's something enormously seductive about the combination of influence and affluence, perhaps because of the high reinforcement value of power. Influence over others develops a sense of power and affluence purchases the trappings and artifacts of power. So long as there is a widespread demand for psychotherapy delivered by psychologists, a large number in the field may be lured away from those areas of service where more innovative developments might be expected. Let me be more specific, with examples. The number of mentally-retarded persons in our society will continue to increase for several reasons that I have spelled out in some detail elsewhere. Psychology is the appropriate field for developing a rich range of training programs aimed at maximizing the limited abilities of the retarded in ways which would help them enjoy a life of reasonable quality. But the affluent life-style available to the psychotherapist is sufficiently seductive (reinforcing) that it not only lures away persons who might make contributions in

the field of retardation, but more importantly, its visibility is a significant factor in recruitment. Young people attracted to the field of psychology as a life profession are self-selected. No one forces anyone into this field. Young people are recruited as a result of their perceptions of those people already in the field. As we become more committed to the delivery of psychotherapy in suburbia (how many millions of teenagers watch the Bob Newhart show?), we find our recruits from among those who have little motivation to work with the retarded.

Another trend bears careful watching. Despite setbacks and mistakes, both civil libertarians' and authoritarians' grumbling and hostility, the field of behavior modification marches ahead. The numbers of behavioral therapists increase, and their dedication to both basic and evaluative research sharpens the power of their methods (or leads them to abandon or change their ways). A number of the experimentally-oriented young psychologists who will not find employment in Academia may be diverted to this area of intervention.

I am suggesting that the growth of "behavior modification" programs in both educational and clinical settings offers one possible bridge for the experimental psychology graduate student who wants to improve his or her employment capability in an applied area. Indeed, this area of application could become a dominant force in applied psychology over the middle range future.

In this respect, too, there seems to be in prospect some increase in societal demand for people trained in evaluation research. With the increasing federal interest in the solution of urgent "applied" social problems (such as crime, alcoholism and drug addiction) there is a concomitant demand for people who can evaluate the new approaches and new programs. As of now the university graduate psychology programs seem to be highly committed to producing people in relatively pure scientific fields rather than in applied and evaluative research. Here is another area deserving self-conscious study and possible change.

Industrial and educational psychologists see a continuing demand for people. Fields like marketing, community counseling, organizational counseling, public program planning and assessment, educational counseling, etc., show continuing growth. While the present number in some of these fields is small, the path has been blazed and large numbers could follow.

Many psychologists have decided that our field has knowledge which, if combined with legal and political clout, could change social institutions, could build a better, more egalitarian, higher quality society. It was the testimony of psychologists and other social scientists which led the Supreme Court to the 1954 decision opposing separate but equal school facilities. The evidence from psychological studies is clear. Separate housing, and separate job assignments and educational opportunities simply destroy the quality of life for the people affected. It will be the research and the social effectiveness of psychologists which ultimately put an end to discrimination based on race, sex, and age. Psychologists are moving in to collaborative efforts with environmentalists, futurologists; political people are asking for help in social indicators, in survey data, etc. Other speakers will deal with these areas in detail so I will not go on, except to identify them as part of the picture of future employment.

While on the subject of social justice, I must point out that the society of the future, if it is to have high quality, must solve the problems of sexism and racism.

In some areas a kind of Hegelian dialectic operates to create a healthy force, counterforce and synthesis. In perhaps no other field is there so much interest in the women's movement as in psychology. Psychotherapists, most of whom are male, have been caught and nailed to the wall for espousing a sexist double-standard view of mental health. The women psychologists have marched thrice around the arena with Freud's head on a pike and psychoanalysis will never be the same again. Fortunately.

In terms of innovative activities by psychology to improve the quality of life, I would place the elimination of sexism and of racism very high on my list of priorities. The problem to be solved is who will pay to support this effort?

Psychologists, almost to a person, belong in the humanistic camp. (I'm not talking about those psychologists who call themselves humanists in order to rip off the freebies that are part of the open, egalitarian humanistic exchange.) Rather, I am saying that psychologists, including even the most hard-nosed, experimental, data-oriented laboratory researcher, tend to be strongly committed to the human enterprise. Most of them, I suspect, will need considerably less consciousness raising than, say, engineers or mathematicians or astronomers to oppose subtle racism, and to be acceptable to the feminist group. If the society of the future is to be higher quality than the society of today, I suggest that we need to help prevent sexist and racist thinking and behavior, so that whatever improved quality of life exists, exists for everyone.

If we are to set a goal, consciously or otherwise, of the elimination of sexism and racism, we had better be prepared for strong and powerful opposition from forces in society which benefit economically from the perpetuation of these kinds of damaging ideologies and myths. If you are data-oriented, I suggest that you sentence yourself to watching an afternoon of television in your hotel room, where it will quickly be apparent, from the commercials particularly, but also from all of the greed shows, that millions of women are brainwashed into being consumers of worthless products bringing enormous profits to manufacturers who thrive in a sexist, nuclear-family oriented consumer society.

There will undoubtedly be demands for other innovative psychological services in the future steady-state society. If population growth levels off while production scales down, and the work week is shortened; if in a hundred years we abandon our cities and people live 50 to 100 miles out in the country in planned

communities, commuting to 3-day a week jobs -- if all of these and other changes proposed by the futurologists occur, what will be the psychological problems and what will be the kinds of intervention demanded of psychologists? Universities should consider revising curricula to include the psychological study of leisure, the effects of boredom, etc. We should be concerned, too, with changes in patterns of child rearing, in the future of the nuclear family, in group marriage, commune living, etc.

Psychologists have paid too little attention to the effects of changing sexual morality and behavior. With the separation of sex from procreation, and with the growing importance of sex as recreation all sorts of psychological effects should be investigated. These areas are largely untouched, but will demand social science input.

Of certain things about the future we may be reasonably certain. (If these assumptions are wrong it really doesn't matter.) 1) There will be people. 2) People will be behaving. 3) The behavior will occur in environments that condition behavior. 4) There will be behavioral problems. Part of the futurology game is to try to anticipate the nature of these future environments and problems, extrapolating from current trends. This is a game that anyone can play. Some mind-stretching and brain-storming should be occurring among those responsible for planning graduate programs in psychology. Clearly, we may have to cut back on our analytic style of research training. Psychologists skilled at manipulating clean-cut variables in clearly-controlled environments are not going to be in great demand. Our human problems, now and for the near future, are far more diffuse and ambiguous. While there are those who would argue for the importance of transfer of training from the laboratory to the social problem arena, there is not much evidence that hard-nosed scientists enjoy working with "the big problems." (Note should be taken of the fact that not all students pursue their graduate studies

with an eye on later job opportunities. Some, like those depression-generation students are attracted to psychological study out of zest for the subject matter. We suspect, however, that this group is small.)

The speakers who follow me will certainly have much to say on these same themes.